

# Spring Nursing Graduates Celebrate with Family, Friends and Faculty

More than 1,100 family and friends gathered at the Hawaii Convention Center on Thursday, May 14, 2015, to celebrate over 100 spring 2015 graduates from UHM Nursing. Graduates from the Bachelor of Science, RN to BS, Executive RN to BS, Master of Science, Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) nursing programs were recognized in this spring's Ceremony.

The students selected Ms. Kathy Muneno, Weekend Anchor at KHON2, to deliver their keynote address. Ms. Muneno shared a heartwarming, personal story that highlighted her individual experiences with nurses. Ms. Muneno expressed that she hoped her story would inspire the graduates, “[I] share it to show you the incredible power you each have within you to touch lives; to change lives of people who are in the grip of deepest pain, misery and fear.” Through her address, Ms. Muneno detailed the traumatic and heartbreaking experience of being separated from her newborn son, who had to stay in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) for three and a half months. She shared that what made a difference for her and her husband, Nainoa Thompson, was the care the nurses displayed for her son and family, “We [felt] helpless ... but the love and care we witnessed nurses giving to our child and all the children in the room who were at risk, was extraordinary.” She was amazed that despite the extreme demands of the profession, the nurses she interacted with remained so caring and professional. At the conclusion of her speech, Ms. Muneno shared a heartfelt appreciation for nurses and praised the graduates for committing to “the most important humanitarian profession that I know of.”



Student speakers included BSN graduate Brenda Duong and DNP graduate Mary Smith. Bachelor's graduate Brenda Duong entertained the audience with humorous recollections of her classmates' early nursing school experiences. "For our first day of clinical, we were all so excited to actually start taking care of actual people. It was the first time for some of us to deal with vomit, urine, stool, sweat, saliva, difficulty breathing ... and this was all before even stepping into the building!" She continued by recognizing the family, friends and faculty who contributed to the success of all her fellow graduates. "Thank you for supporting and encouraging us throughout this journey ... don't worry though, didn't you hear? We're all going to be nurses now so we'll be taking care of you."

DNP graduate Mary Smith elaborated on the vast range of expertise among her fellow advanced degree graduates. She highlighted the master's graduates who "will work in our most medically underserved regions of Hawaii providing care for our most vulnerable patients and communities." To the PhD graduates, she acknowledged how they will "conduct research that will contribute to increasing our scientific knowledge to

improve patient and health care.” She addressed her fellow DNP graduates, defining them as nurses “who will apply scientific evidence to improve the quality of patient care, health care services and health policies.” In closing, Smith encouraged her peers to continue forward as leaders in the nursing field despite the challenges that may lie ahead. “Be mindful that nothing in life worth having comes easily; and let the sky be your limit.”

In keeping with tradition, students invited family members to participate on stage during the pinning ceremony. Each student received a ribbon lei from the School with a UHM Nursing alumni pin affixed to it. UH Manoa Nursing Alumni Association (UHMNAA) President Sally Ishikawa MPH '90, BS '70, continued a more recent tradition of giving a \$250 cash gift to accompany the student-selected Professional Nurse Award, which was presented to Jessica Niles. Additionally, UHMNAA awarded one-year of complimentary alumni chapter membership to each of the following awardees:

- Jessica Chadwell, Leadership Award
- Tara-lyn Odo, DAISY in Training Award
- Staci Clute, Kahiau Award
- Chelsey Stout, Community Service Award

This year, there were multiple recipients for the Academic Achievement Award: Mark Gil Billwayen, Rosemarie Calma, Alanna Dodd, Ryan Gingrich, Emily Groh, Sierra Hess, Rachel Kanahele, Priscilla Mathison, Jennifer Murray, Jessica Niles, Sheri Oki, Sayaka Reasoner, and Shy Wegiel. Each of the awardees was recognized for maintaining a 4.0 GPA.



The Dean's Research Award was awarded to PhD student Jennifer Chee in recognition of her study project titled "Deliberate Practice for the Purpose of Psychomotor Skill Acquisition: Nursing Students and the Motivational Constraint", to DNP student Eluned Mun in recognition of her study project titled "Integration of Palliative Care Standards in the ICU at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Hawaii" and to undergraduate student Brenda Duong in recognition of her study project titled "A Qualitative Exploration of Dancing Hula for Health."

The undergraduate students presented UHM Nursing faculty Ms. Frankie Hale, MS, RN, with the Nurse Educator Award, in recognition of her respect and dedication to her students' success. Ms. Patricia Brooks, RNC, MSN, was the recipient of the faculty-selected DAISY Faculty Award, in honor of her exceptional impact on students and inspirational influence on their future.

UHMNAA and the School recognized UHMNAA President Sally Ishikawa with a special award for her service leading the chapter over the past three years. Mrs. Ishikawa will be succeeded by Ms. Lori Kaneshige, MSN, RN. For more information

about the alumni chapter,  
visit <http://www.nursing.hawaii.edu/uhmnaa>.

UHM Nursing will celebrate the fall 2015 graduates at Recognition Ceremony in December 2015. For questions about Recognition Ceremony, please contact Carlyn Okatomi at [carlynli@hawaii.edu](mailto:carlynli@hawaii.edu).